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AUTHOR Fargo, George; Laine, Janice
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ABSTRACT

The reading problems unique to Hawaiian children are related to the diverse ethnic culture composition of the State. A contributing factor is the discrepancy between percentages of ethnic groups and their representations in the ranks of students and teachers. Data indicate an underrepresentation of Filipino and Hawaiian students and an overrepresentation of Chinese and Japanese students in the ranks of high academic achievers. In addition, there is a cultural and ethnic mismatch between students and teachers at both the public school and university levels. There is strong evidence that this mismatch is responsible for the low achievement rates of Filipino and Hawaiian students. The relationship between ethnicity and academic achievement is supported by a number of studies. In recognition of this relationship, two programmatic approaches, the Hawaii-English Program and the Kamehameha Early Education Program, have been implemented in an attempt to improve the English language skills of Filipino and Hawaiian students. It is hoped that the recognition of ethnic and cultural diversity in the schools will enhance the reading achievement of these pupils. (EB)

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ETHNICITY AND READING PROBLEMS IN HAWAII

George Fargo and Janice Laine *

Hawaii has since 1850 been a bridge between the many cultures of the Pacific Basin and the mainland of the United States. Each ethnic group has made significant contributions to the pluralistic character of the state and nation. The rainbow state has incorporated language, music, dance, food and traditions into the everyday lives of its citizens.

The flow of immigration from 73,137 in 1853 to 768,559 in 1970 reflects the broad changing pattern of ethnic representation.

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Table 1.—ETHNIC STOCK: 1853 TO 1970

Ethnic stock	Old definition[1]						New definition[2]	
	1853	1878	1900	1920	1940	1960	1970	Percent
All groups[3]	73,137	57,985	154,001	255,912	423,330	632,772	768,559	100.0
Hawaiian	70,036	44,088	29,799	23,723	14,375	11,294	71,274	9.3
Part Hawaiian	983	3,420	9,857	18,027	49,935	91,109	...	...
Caucasian[4]	1,687	3,748	26,819	54,742	112,087	202,230	301,429	39.2
Chinese	364	6,045	25,767	23,507	28,774	38,197	52,375	6.8
Filipino	5	...	...	21,031	52,569	69,070	95,354	12.4
Indian	...	...	...	...	...	472	1,216	0.2
Japanese	...	...	61,111	109,274	157,905	203,455	217,669	28.3
Korean	...	...	...	4,950	6,851	...	9,625	1.3
Negro	...	...	233	348	255	4,943	7,517	1.0
Other groups[5]	62	684	415	310	579	12,002	12,100	1.6

[1] Part Caucasians classified by race of non-Caucasian parent; other persons of mixed race (except Part Hawaiians) classified by race of father. Data for 1853-1900 partly estimated.
[2] Persons of mixed race classified either by self-identification or by race of father.
[3] Final totals (not available by race) were 255,881 in 1920, 422,770 in 1940, and 769,913 in 1970.
[4] "White" in 1960 and 1970. Includes Puerto Ricans (5,602 in 1920 and 8,296 in 1940).
[5] Includes Filipinos in 1878 and 1900, Japanese and Negroes before 1900, Koreans in 1960 and before 1920, American Indians before 1960, and Micronesians, Samoans, and other groups not shown separately in all years.
Source: Andrew W. Lind, *Hawaii's People*, 3d ed. (1967), p. 28; Robert C. Schmitt, *Demographic Statistics of Hawaii: 1778-1965* (1968), pp. 74 and 120; *U.S. Census of Population: 1960*, Final Report PC(1)-13B, table 15, and Final Report PC(2)-1C, table 61; *U.S. Census of Population: 1970*, Final Report PC(1)-D13, tables 138 and 139.

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Table 1 indicates the relative percentages of the major ethnic groups in the state's population. In the 1970 census, Hawaiians constituted 9%, Caucasians 39%, Chinese 7%, Filipinos 12% and Japanese 28% of the population.

The many languages which constitute the mother tongue in the community are shown in Table 2.

Table 2.
MOTHER TONGUE: 1970

Mother tongue	Persons
Total population[1]	768,300
English	447,200
German	5,700
Portuguese	9,300
Spanish	13,300
Other European languages	10,400
Chinese, Cantonese, or Taiwanese	26,900
Korean	6,200
Japanese	116,900
Ilocano, Tagalog, or other Filipino tongues	50,200
Hawaiian	18,700
Other Polynesian[2] Melanesian, or Micronesian	4,200
Other languages	13,200
Not reported	46,100

[1] The final census count for Hawaii was 769,913.
[2] Includes Samoan, Tahitian, Tongan, and other Polynesian languages, except Hawaiian.
Source: East-West Population Institute, special tabulation of 1970 Census Public Use Sample for Hawaii.

Each of these language groups has expressions that make up Hawaiian Creole English ("pidgin"), for example, akamai - smart, hapa - half, hapai - pregnant and hanabata - post nasal drip.

Children with reading problems in Hawaii probably have a great deal in common with their mainland peers; however, the problems unique to Hawaiian children are undoubtedly realted to the ethnic and cultural composition of the state.

A Heritage of Diversity

> When you start measuring somebody, measure him right, child, measure him right. Make sure you done taken into account what hills and valleys he come through before he got wherever he is.
>
> Lena Younger admonishing her daughter in Lorraine Hansberry's "Raisin in the Sun"

The population of Hawaii is young -- 50% were under 25 years of age in 1970 -- and racially diversified, with over ¼ of the total being the product of mixed marriages.(1)

Gallimore and Howard (2) identified the value rewards in the dominant white middle class ethnic group which are slanted towards an achievement orientation is in direct opposition to the Hawaiian life-style which is affiliation motivated. Hawaiians are often characterized as lazy or unproductive, ignoring the importance that the Hawaiian culture attaches to human relationships, rather than individual or economic achievement. There appears to be a need for the school system to

provide a better match between the school and home experiences of affiliation-oriented children. Dr. E. Aluli, a Hawaiian physician ("Hawaiian Culture", 1977) explained the alienation the Hawaiian child feels in school,

> I don't know if you realize it, but most of us felt and feel that the schools are very cold, that it was very competitive and it was pretty irrelevant in the kinds of things that we wanted to be doing at that time.(3)

If the schools were to become more responsive to the rich heritage of difference among the varied ethnic groups, perhaps the educational problems in general and the reading problems in particular would yield to awareness and sensitivity to difference.

The Schools

Hawaii presents some startling discrepancies between percentages of ethnic groups and their representation in the ranks of teachers and students. Perhaps most striking is the high percentage of teachers of Japanese heritage, 57.9%, compared to their proportion in the population of 28.3%; whereas Filipinos represent 12.4% of the state's population, 2.1% of the teachers, and 16.8% of the public school pupils. In Table 3 there is an examination of the census data regarding ethnic background of the population as a whole and representation of teachers and pupils in public school which would indicate a considerable cultural and ethnic mismatch between children and their teachers.

Table 3

ETHNIC REPRESENTATION IN HAWAII'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS

	State Population*	Teachers**	Students***
Caucasian	39.2%	18.7%	30.4%
Japanese	28.3%	57.9%	22.8%
Filipino	12.4%	2.1%	16.8%
Hawaiian and part-Hawaiian	9.3%	6.9%	17.4%
Chinese	6.8%	8.8%	4.8%
Korean	1.3%	1.3%	1.4%
Black	1.0%	.3%	1.3%
Other	1.8%	3.6%	5.1%

*Based on 1970 Census data.
**As of June, 1974 includes teachers, counselors, registrars and school librarians.
***As of June, 1975.

SOURCE: HONOLULU ADVERTISER 12/31/75

A Glimpse at Secondary and Higher Education

A brief look at high school completion and university attendance figures continue to identify the achieving Caucasians, Japanese and Chinese and the underachieving Hawaiian, Filipino and Samoan. Schmitt(4) indicates that only 39.4% of the Filipinos in Hawaii, 16 years and over, completed high school. Comparable figures are 65.1% for children of Chinese heritage and 61.3% for the daughters and sons of the Japanese immigrants.

Since the individuals who attend the university generally have the greatest access to well paying professional jobs, it is enlightening to see who "makes it" in Hawaii's educational system.

An examination of the ethnic composition of students enrolled at the University of Hawaii - Manoa, relative to overall percentages in the state's population, indicates a similar pattern of the "educationally successful" ethnic groups.

Table 4

ETHNIC DISTRIBUTION OF U. OF HAWAII (MANOA)*

	% of University Population	State % Ethnic Distribution
CAUCASIAN	26.6	39.2
HAWAIIAN/PART HAWAIIAN	4.4	9.3
CHINESE	12.8	6.8
FILIPINO	2.0	12.4
JAPANESE	42.6	28.3
KOREAN	1.3	1.3
BLACK	0.2	1.0
**MIXED/OTHER	10.0	1.7

*These data were compiled by the University of Hawaii Survey Research Office (SRO, 1973-1) with a sample size of 1,432.

**Includes mixed Chinese/Japanese, but not part-Hawaiian.

Once again, the data are glaring in the underrepresentation of students of Filipino and Hawaiian heritage and the overrepresentation of students of Chinese and Japanese cultural heritage.

Ethnicity and Achievement

The facts and figures presented indicate, with a reasonable degree of accuracy, that there is a profound relationship between ethnicity and achievement. Haas and Resurrection(5) have pointed out that "as the ethnic balance of the schools has shifted over the years, the heavily Japanese-American staff in the public schools is increasingly called upon to teach larger percentages of Filipinos, Hawaiians, Samoans, and students of other ethnic backgrounds with which they may be culturally unfamiliar."

Norton et al.(6) substantiate these data by indicating that the performance levels of Filipino and Hawaiian students fall far below pupils of Chinese and Japanese heritage. And further, that children of Filipino and Hawaiian heritage decline in their relative levels of performance in each succeeding grade of their academic careers.

The Sequential Tests of Education Progress (STEP) indicate the strong relationship between ethnicity and achievement. Schools with 20% or more students of Filipino or part-Hawaiian heritage in their enrollment are 90% in low achievement schools.(7)

Lai and Post(8) further substantiate the dramatic relationships of ethnicity and achievement with additional data derived from

correlations of educational level of parents and achievement level of students. Briefly, in well-to-do Kahala with a 14.3 median educational level of parents, the children are in the 9th stanine in vocabulary and 9th stanine in reading comprehension for grade four children; while at Kaiulani, where parents are predominantly Hawaiian, Filipino and Samoan, with a median educational level of parents at a 9th grade level, the children are in the 2nd stanine in vocabulary and a 1st stanine in reading comprehension.

Before going on to the next section, the authors would like to cite a statement relevant to the texture of Hawaii that has just been reviewed. At the Claremont Reading Conference, Fargo (1973) stated:

> All children need the experience of knowing the excitement of cultural difference in the context of common human needs. All children need the experience of knowing "their" difference is a plus rather than a minus in the context of common human learning. All children need to be able to 'read' as much as they can, whether it be a contract with fine print, a repair manual, a cloud or an intimate moment. For that we are accountable and our accountability must emerge from a system founded on regard-for-the-child, for every child is a possibility.(9)

Programatic Intervention

Over the years millions of dollars have been allocated to reduce the reading problems encountered by underachieving Hawaiian, Filipino and Samoan children. Two major programatic approaches will be briefly described in terms of responsiveness to reading problems in the State. No attempt is made to rank order, evaluate, or otherwise assess the success or failure of these programs. The two programs are (1) HEP, Hawaii-English Program, specifically designed to develop and adapt materials to address the local language patterns in order to improve

English language skills, and (2) KEEP, Kamehameha Early English Program, a model research and development program aimed particularly at K - 3 children who are of Hawaiian or part-Hawaiian background.

The Hawaii English Program

The Hawaii English Program (HEP) was initiated in May, 1966 as a federally funded, joint activity of Hawaii's Department of Education and the University of Hawaii. HEP was designed as a kindergarten through sixth-grade language arts curriculum developed in the areas of literature, language skills, and language systems. The goals of the three subprograms may be described as follows:

1. The goal of the literature subprogram is to enable students to enjoy and understand literature, defined for the program as "an art which uses language to communicate ideas, experience, and feeling through symbolic forms."

2. The overall goal of the language skills subprogram is to help students progress toward synthesized language control for the purpose of communicating and learning.

3. The major goal of the language systems subprogram is to have students learn about the nature and structure of their language.

In 1970 - 71, Hawaii's English Program language skills and literature subprograms for grades K - 1 were formally installed in at least one classroom in every school in the state; thus, approximately 14% of the elementary school children received some instruction in the program. In 1971 - 72, six of 15 language systems units were installed. By the 1973 - 74 school year, approximately 57% of all

K - 6 students were in HEP classes. Several evaluation studies of HEP were conducted. The studies varied in scope and sophistication. The results, in summary, favored HEP when compared to the non-HEP classes. HEP has received recognition and won several awards, nationally and locally. In addition, HEP has been accepted and installed in several school systems outside the state of Hawaii. California, Washington, Texas, Guam, American Samoa and Trust Territory all have HEP programs.

KEEP - Kamehameha Early Education Program

KEEP is an educational research and development center operated by the Kamehameha Schools/Bishop Estate. The program was initiated in 1971 as a model research and development program with the mission to research learning problems of children of Hawaiian and part-Hawaiian background, specifically to find a program that would be effective in teaching these children to read. Although some research was done in public school classrooms, KEEP's major work is and was conducted at a four-classroom research and demonstration school, the Ka Na'i Pono R & D School, serving approximately 110 children K - 3 in Honolulu. The program seeks to disseminate its research findings to teachers in the public schools.

The school population for which KEEP has been designed consists of the 35,000 Hawaiian and part-Hawaiian children presently in the public schools. The major focus of the program is directed toward an urban area of Honolulu characterized by high population density, low SES, and low school achievement by children of Hawaiian heritage.

Tharp and Gallimore (10) report on the common belief that the children's bi-dialecticality -- with Hawaiian Creole English ("pidgin") the preferred code -- was the major cause of the children's reading underachievement; we touched earlier upon the statistics that show Hawaiian schools serving predominantly pidgin-speaking students registering the lowest achievement scores in the state. But the psychologists refute the position that bi-dialecticality is the problem; and indeed, they suggest that KEEP research not only revealed that pidgin was not the root of the problem, but that the children were competent to learn to read, even if they did not. What they found was that even though most of these children live in an urban environment, they are brought up with many features of traditional socialization practices. Thus, KEEP is continuing its research in the areas it has found to be important to Hawaiian education: curriculum, linguistics, ethnicity, and psychology. Reading specialists are interested in KEEP because the program is based on reading lessons that take Hawaiian cultural events, such as "talking story" or story telling, into consideration. It would appear that where many observers charge that educational programs are often incongruent with the culture of many students, KEEP's acknowledgement of a Hawaiian child's patterns and behaviors tends to produce some positive results.

The scope of KEEP is broad. It has so far produced some 77 technical reports in the areas of cultural considerations, reading, industriousness, language cognition, training and consultation, and curriculum. Tharp and Gallimore (10) report that KEEP's reading program is based upon the Flowing Wells Public School Reading System.(11) The program provides

specific objectives in decoding, encoding, vocabulary, comprehension, test awareness and reference skills; the program can be used with any basal reading series.

Evaluation of the program is conducted with the Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests, Gates-McGinitie Reading, and the Metropolitan Achievement Test, following each child through three criterion-referenced externally administered standardized measures at the middle and the end of the school year.

The results of the KEEP program indicate that Grade 2 scores are slightly below grade level and Grade 3 is even further behind; however, there is substantial improvement over previous years. The ability to know and track areas or subareas of improvement directs the KEEP efforts towards the next programmatic steps. The use of an objective system, such as the Reading Support System (11) has helped to pinpoint the directions of efforts and indicated the need for a greater emphasis on the development of comprehension skills.

Interpreting Results for Hawaii

Once again, we have to pause and consider the particular problems that define education in Hawaii. Indeed, interpretation of test data in Hawaii cannot be done and really mean anything unless the multicultural makeup of its population is taken into account. For example, how does one draw a representation in the population? Some test questions may be biased against one group, but not another. Mainland-developed tests can be (and often are) biased against islanders. (12)

With a population that is approximately 8% immigrant (the national figure is 2%), it is virtually impossible to make valid, controlled comparisons with how the rest of the United States is doing

(on standard achievement tests). Yet such comparisons are constantly being made by many educators, legislators, and evaluators.

Similar problems undoubtedly exist elsewhere. It is not a new argument, nor does it apply only to the state of Hawaii. Norm-referenced, standardized achievement tests have been recognized as generally inappropriate. Many reasons for invalidity are advanced by many people. Possibly the least controversial ones are over-generality, nonoverlapping of objectives, cultural bias, low reliability for individual scores, questionable norms, confusing directions, and poor items(12).

And as we have seen, Hawaii's individuality in these matters is more evident than most. A recent study by Lai(13) on the Stanford Achievement Test results show some of these specifics for Hawaii. For example, the usual demographic variables (to determine SES), such as family income or parents' education, accounted for as much as 86% of the variance in the tests scores. This finding obviously left very little that could be accounted for by the program being evaluated. Similarly, a committee, a legislative body, anyone who would like to find out how a certain group of children compare to the rest of the United States is asking for a comparison that is basically impossible. For example, if standardized achievement tests are used to compare achievement of Hawaiian fourth-graders with mainland fourth-graders, the results will be invalid unless at least four assumptions can be made: (1) Hawaii's socioeconomic status is similar to the mainland's, (2) the test measures only objectives that are considered significant by the group which constitutes an important part of the audience of the evaluation, (3) test administration was of the same caliber as that used when the norming was carried out, and

(4) the norms are up-to-date as well as generally valid.

For Hawaii, these assumptions cannot be made because (1) there exists substantial evidence that the pattern of socioeconomic levels is not similar in Hawaii and the mainland; (2) subtest scores do not adequately differentiate functioning; (3) the caliber of test administration is rarely equal to that used for the norming process; and (4) validity and appropriateness of the norms cannot be taken for granted, certainly not when dealing with Hawaii.

Two and Yet One: A Note on Sameness and Difference

In closing we would like to present an invocation made by Reverend Roland Tatsuguchi, a Buddhist minister and special education teacher, as he spoke at a public meeting to initiate the International Year of the Handicapped Child. We have substituted "the child with a reading problem" for "handicapped child."

> "TWO AND YET ONE; ONE AND YET TWO." The child with a reading problem and the competent reader are discernable they say from each other; and yet they emerge from the same ultimate essence of life itself. And yet the reading impaired child with his idiosyncrasies is set apart from his peers. Each child who has difficulty in reading has special problems and unique needs that are his very own. So also has his so-called normal peer. We have come together for a better understanding and insight into how children may be helped to read.
>
> May all those present be illumined by the ultimate source of undistortable Wisdom, so that the knowledge and skills so acquired through this experience will be of the compassionate supportive type that truly heals, and not of that variety that is misleading, deceptive, if not exploitative and manipulative.
>
> May those participating in reading instruction make this year of the International Child, also the Year of the International Handicapped Child, for both in their very essence are rooted in the very process of living itself. For the Spring Breeze discerns not rightness from wrongness for there is no "highness" or "lowness" inherent in it. It is only the flowers and branches themselves that have the roundness of shape or the shortness or longness of form.
>
> May the virtues of Wisdom impeccable clarity be your very light.

May the substance of enduring compassionate concern be the very substance of the insights and skills that you will come to gain.

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